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Inaugural Dissertation  
on  
Dysentery  
by  
John F. Whitchill  
of  
Pennsylvania.  
1827.

Sept 20 1877

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Memorandum of Association

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In selecting dysentery as the subject of my inaugural dissertation, I am influenced, not by the expectation that I shall be able to introduce any thing entirely new, but by the hope that I shall thereby become more intimately acquainted with a disease, which seems to have baffled the skill of the most learned physicians in all ages, and in all countries.

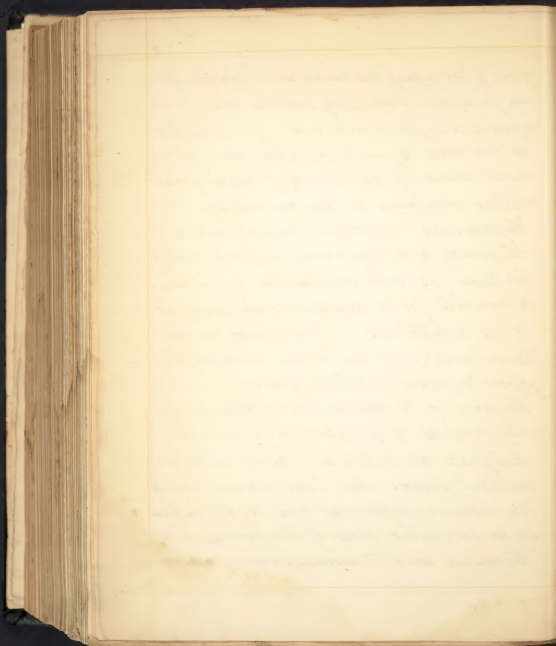
The pathology of dysentery given by authors and public lecturers, is so different, and the treatment so various and apparently opposite, that the mind of the student of medicine is unsettled, until he approaches the bed of sickness; and then he prescribes in doubt, and in doubt awaits the issue. Many physicians have certainly gone astray by placing too much confidence in favourite remedies. From the opportunity I have had, during the last four



years, of witnessing this disease in the practice of my preceptor, I am fully satisfied that it assumes a different aspect every year, and that no two cases require precisely the same treatment: hence the impropriety of placing unlimited confidence in any one remedy.

The judicious practitioner carefully accepts the remedy to the symptoms; and it is nothing less than the most consummate empiricism, to prescribe for a disease, having no regard to its peculiarities. "What holds in particular cases" says one of our learned professors "is made to apply to all."

The name of the disease was introduced by Hippocrates, and intended by him to designate all intestinal fluxes, with or without blood. This term became restricted, however, after his time, to an inflamed or ulcerated state of the bowels, with tormina and tenesmus, accompanied



by mucous or bloody evacuations.

Cullen defines this disease to be contagious, and his opinion is corroborated by Sydenham, Pringle, and others; but in this they are opposed by Bamfield, Bancroft, Johnson, and others, who had great experience, and in tropical dysentery, too, where the disease is more malignant, and where they would be more likely to become contagious.

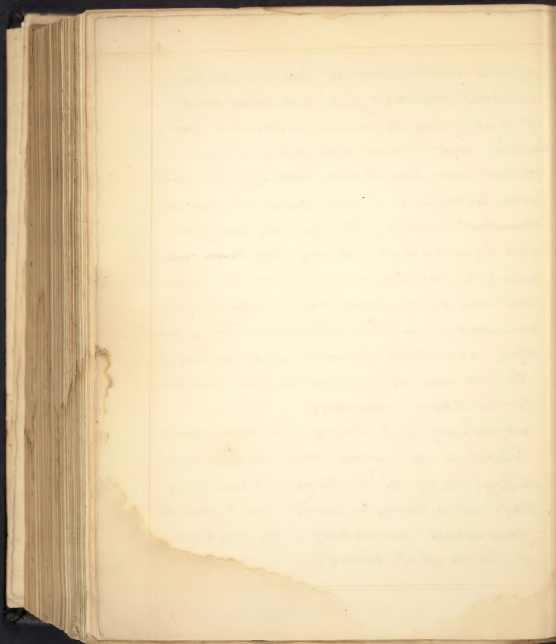
Professor Chapman is not of opinion that the disease is generally contagious, but thinks that it is so in the typhoid cases only. He gives very sound reasons in his lectures against its arising from the effluvia of the alvine evacuations, or stagnant secretions and excretions, and more plausibly urges, that it is propagated through the medium of a vitiated secretion of the capillary vessels. The various names given to it by





different authors, such as *febris sui generis*,  
*intestinal remittent fever*, *intestinal state*  
*of fever*, *febris intestoressa*, *intestorata*, *sthe-*  
*matisim*, and *typhus* and *intestinal inter-*  
*mittent fever*, seem to have been applied with  
 some propriety, as I saw during the late in-  
 termittent epidemic, the dysentery and fever  
 and ague, evidently arising from the same cause:  
 cases of the two diseases existed at the same  
 time, and in the same house, some of which  
 were distinct in their characteristic symp-  
 toms, and others blended; and indeed,  
 the two diseases yielded in some measure  
 to the same remedies.

Ascribable to Johnson "The same cause  
 which, in one person, will induce dys-  
 entery, may in a second, cause hepa-  
 titis; in a third, enteritis; in a fourth,  
 pneumonia, according to the weakness  
 of this or that viscus?"



One of the most interesting symptoms of  
this sentiment is an increasing desire  
to see the collection of the  
country, by constant returning visitors  
including the Museum, with its adjacent  
Gardens; the nature, the thing, remains  
of a permanent institution of the  
country. It may, interesting case of  
the same occurred in the museum of  
my collection in the year of 1824.  
There are throughout, it must be  
of Museum, situated with the  
to bring with the nature, and  
nature. It is although the extent  
and the days, not the last part.  
one was removed by the most effi-  
cient means known in Mexico  
Mexico. It is not now to be  
and it is not a new collection, one  
must, as the: 1821, and the whole



gation, since it remains, under all  
 medical treatment, as unchanged as in the  
 first instance. A repetition of the same  
 plan, which was the only thing that  
 helped through the inflammatory process,  
 but was rendered by the fever.

Large doses of opium were finally tried,  
 in the hope of removing the constriction, but  
 in vain. All efforts proved abortive, and the  
 died on the tenth day. At post mortem exam-  
 ination was urged, by his attending and  
 consulting physicians; such, however, was the  
 repugnance of the family, that their consent could  
 not be obtained. Other symptoms character-  
 istic of this disease, but it is unnecessary to dwell long-  
 er on the description of a disease, the character-  
 istic symptoms of which cannot be mistaken  
 by the most inexperienced observer.  
 It will therefore suffice to state briefly  
 of the cause. How are such as necessary.



check perspiration. Thusly causing according to  
frequent in a fever & cold to a person upon  
the insulating. In which it is not confined  
principally is the universal monthly when  
the case in the warm and the slightly cool  
attended with very little or no matter  
even is a cold matter when into the stom-  
ach more or less. The use in the place  
of change with others with the man who  
not with. All the things and it is not  
the same as the many & not at all  
at all & the most important for the  
time being.

In practice - however in some dis-  
eases is a mixed one without and probably  
under a strong conviction, namely, that  
the will be able to get a cure, but in  
dependence it is uncertain. In the first ten  
feet it is of no more the settled character,  
calls to his remembrance the many cases









I have a great deal of business to do, and I am  
 very busy, but I will write you a few lines  
 to let you know how I am getting on. I am  
 well, and hope these few lines will find you  
 the same. I am very much interested in  
 the progress of the cause, and I am sure  
 that you are also. I am sure that you are  
 doing all that you can for the cause, and I  
 am sure that you are doing it very well. I  
 am sure that you are doing it very well, and  
 I am sure that you are doing it very well.

The ... ..  
... ..  
... ..  
... ..  
The ... ..  
and like Mary ... ..  
by himself; he ... ..



[illegible]



in the commencement of such cases as we  
commonly meet with, such a course is necessary. —

In many cases, too, they are slow to take a  
settle faculty & to take one in the case that accom-  
panied the late intermittent. I believe they were  
a consequence of my, perhaps, not manifest  
advantages. Dring and Thomas recommend  
as a sign for use "in most cases of general  
melancholy" but in ordinary cases they are extrin-  
sically unnecessary if not admitted and ought to  
be used with caution. —

The commencement of dyspepsia is sometimes  
attended with violent vomiting, depending in  
notions from choice morbid action in the  
digestive tract. In such cases, medical remedies  
not only seem to sustain the patient, but  
are almost useless. Calomel and purgatives.  
I have seen an eighth of a grain of the former  
and ten grains of the latter administered in  
consideration every two hours, to no purpose with





the most successful of your policy. The same would  
be an advantage to the Government, and the same  
thing the year went with many others and others  
at its disposal, and applied not to the same  
get some more. After the demand became  
settled the Government now had more and more  
done of the same and a great deal more  
and was satisfied with a good result.  
I have now seen the other part of the  
work of the Government and have seen the  
of the Government and have seen the  
around a likely result.



from the numerous members of the Society  
in the city. The extent to which the Society may  
be extended is not a matter of small importance  
and I am fully satisfied that on the  
recommendation of this Society, a Committee may  
be selected to conduct the extension and any  
other matters which may arise, and I am confident  
that the same will be successful.  
The Committee will also be the principal agents  
in the extension and I am confident that the  
Society will be able to support them and to secure  
the necessary funds and to secure the necessary  
number and extent of the extension.

They will also be the principal agents in the  
extension and I am confident that the  
Society will be able to support them and to secure  
the necessary funds and to secure the necessary  
number and extent of the extension. I am confident  
that the Society will be able to support them and to  
secure the necessary funds and to secure the necessary  
number and extent of the extension.



[illegible]



is without as much power, and if no force are  
 acting, the influence in your system will be  
 in the water, in any sense, long must be  
 given at intervals of four or five hours, until  
 they are able to move. I should recommend  
 you to use it with the greatest care.  
 Some and I have seen evidence of the  
 I have nothing from my friends, but that  
 I am, I think, a good person.

I find that the treatment is  
 highly recommended by many authors and  
 practitioners. I have in the last 10  
 weeks, if you are able to get  
 in a condition of nature, you will be  
 much more in the state of mind. I  
 have found nothing more, except that  
 I am in the state of mind.

Though not a minister I in mind  
 is a person. I think, in mind  
 the mind of the mind is in the





[illegible]



and in this sense it is not specific, not to just be  
 knowing nothing of it from experience. Even of  
 Castor and other warm and powerfull  
 stann and mineral, as cathartics, are well adap-  
 ted to this disease. Castor oil, melted butter and  
 melted casein, are valuable medicines in the  
 commencement of such cases as will not admit  
 of more active purgatives, and in the latter sta-  
 ges of all those in which cathartics are indicated,  
 even in cholera. Camella, in this disease  
 is useful to give emulsion. When the effort  
 is to assist the operation of cathartics, a pint  
 of melted butter or the same quantity of milk  
 and castor oil may be thrown in the column  
 but it is better to retain for some time  
 tenesmus about four or six ounces. The butter  
 then mixed glassed tea or milk and mu-  
 -con seed are sometimes a most relieving  
 effect, not more than that opium can be  
 administered at a time with advantage, or







shows in the treatment of dyspepsia. It must  
 still be a very desirable, but that we in  
 it, have our opinion, which is, possibly  
 cannot admit. I have seen a great many  
 it in practice, and in the opinion of this dis-  
 ease, although I have seen a great many  
 dyspepsia, I have seen a great many  
 in various combinations, is a very powerful  
 article in the treatment of this disease: com-  
 bined with the decoction of potato and ginger in  
 & with, or with sugar of salt and opium,  
 with chalk and opium, but more it in com-  
 bination with calomel and opium may be used  
 from the most satisfactory effects. By some  
 however the decoction is superior. But  
 believe if you can make use of the advantage  
 in any case, it is in this.

It is common by most authors that opium  
 is a very important medicine in the treatment  
 of dyspepsia. I have never considered it





not a very precious thing, and it is sold  
 at as much as, *costa*. But Sydenham,  
 Prince, Mead, Boerhaave and many of their  
 contemporaries, as well as the most eminent  
 modern physicians, deem it an indispensable  
 article. Sydenham was in the habit  
 of administering an ounce after the dinner  
 and following it the next morning with  
 a similar medicine: and that is the dose  
 of a man of moderate size at the age of  
 60, about 60 years of age. The efficacy of this  
 medicine was attested by great numbers in the  
 treatment of gonorrhea commencing about  
 week after the disease, following by a  
 diminishing one soon that it is of great service  
 following it the next day, & the course  
 over, or some more as in the case.

The doses, that we may frequently meet  
 at the Librarian, when I met the same by a  
 single dose of *antidonium*: and that is



has recently done himself with large  
loss without any other remedy.

Although "just" in several things I  
cannot think the above prescriptions are  
more than suitable the closely in all  
cases upon administering together and  
edg. I have always having been promised,  
Opium then comes in with various addi-  
tions and I fully trust the medicine  
to be a good upon which.

I have in recent cases I know of no other  
suitable for it. It may be given alone, but  
it gives only a rather slight effect, when  
combined with some laxative or stimu-  
lant medicine. The combination of opium  
of lead and opium was highly recom-  
mended by my predecessor in the office as  
a communication in the main for  
near about five years since. It was given  
by my instructor the same evening in



which to treat it in a case which has been  
 seldom reported, but the patient has not  
 taken it more than twice, and, as yet,  
 every day, as the symptoms receded,  
 and the system recovered. The effect was  
 astonishing. The great accumulation seems  
 to be at hand, but on subsequent trials  
 its effects were not so salutary, and it  
 was finally abandoned. The obnoxious  
 mixture is a valuable preparation, of  
 which Gum in Turpentine is an impor-  
 tant ingredient. Gum is to be taken  
 14, when administered as a gum with thick  
 fluid, &c. "It is a common mis-  
 take to suppose it is a substitute  
 for anodyne elixir" says Bland, "the very  
 least the patient is sensible to the most  
 a dose of about two grains of Gum, more-  
 over, somewhat so, & hence by the fringes of  
 Bland, applied to the abdomen are  
 powerful auxiliaries in the treatment



of dysentery. Warmth applied to the surface, as fomentations, warm bath, vapour bath, and particularly the latter should not be overlooked.

It was my intention to have been more full upon some points, and to have recorded some cases of which I took notes last summer, but as I fear I have already been too prolix, I shall here terminate this imperfect essay. I beg leave to add, however, that I shall approach the presence of my distinguished preceptors for an examination, with the most painful apprehensions for the result. Not indeed, from a consciousness of incapacity, but from a fear that an impediment of speech under which I labour, will render me unable to answer such questions as are asked me. As my impediment is always increased by embarrassment, and sometimes to so





great an extent, as to deprive me of the power  
 of articulation, I should most respectfully  
 solicit the indulgence of a little penic, or  
 the privilege of replying in writing to such  
 interrogations as may be asked me. —



